

Professor Joshua Lederberg
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March 20, 1989

Dear Professor Lederberg,

I hope my letter finds you well in Phily. I wish to take this opportunity of your sharing a panel with my long term patron saint John Edsall, especially under the gracious auspices of Professor Thackray, who as you may know, was the person who brought me to the US, to get your advice on the following matter.

You may recall our meeting in your office in mid-November on my way to EAAST-4S Annual meeting in Amsterdam. Following that meeting, I went to Paris to work in the Pasteur Institute Archives where, among other things, I focused on your correspondence with the late Jacques Monod. I have also analyzed the patterns of Monod's major correspondents, of which you are among the top seven, yet the only one not represented in his memorial volume. If interested, I could sent to you my analysis of top correspondents in terms of several sociological and historical variables. My first question is thus why you have not contributed to that volume?

Second, the correspondence between yourself and Monod is important for various reasons, some more obvious than others. It will thus be worthwhile to transcribe it electronically. My question is whether your staff has done something of the sort, and if so whether I could get a copy since such a copy will greatly facilitate my work.

If you do not have such a transcript, my question is whether your staff contemplates doing it in the near future; or alternately whether you could recommend a source which might be interested to fund such transcripts. I could of course write a reasonable proposal to justify such a task. My own NSF project has had some difficulties since we met and even if renewal will be granted, it will be hard to divert funds for a purpose not originally included.

It occurs to me that perhaps you could use your presence in Phily to explore whether the Beckman Institute might contribute toward such an undertaking (they have all kinds of archival and related projects). At the Manchester HSS/BSHS meeting last July Professor Thackray told me that his Center is interested to branch nto the history of molecular biology and we have been corresponding in this matter since that meeting. Sadly, because of mail problems in Philadelphia around X-mas time, we missed an opportunity to advance the discussion at the HSS Annual meeting in Cincinnati late in December 1988 (where incidentally I received one of HSS 5 prizes, given for "outstanding research essay").

Once again, many thanks for your generous and insightful "interview" last November. I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Dr. Phina G. Abir-Am

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